An exception to this was the case of a junior high school girl who left her mother and stepfather and went to live in the city. The incident was known to all villagers within a short time, and gossip was rife, but referring to the case directly in the presence of the mother was avoided. When the mother finally heard the gossip, she contended that the story had been circulated by a certain family, singled out the woman of that house (who happens to be one of the few Christians in Taira) and told her in no uncertain words that she, as a Christian who wants to do good and others to be good, should know better than to spread evil gossip.

Concern with the affairs of other villagers is, of course, a result of the general intimacy between people. Not only one's immediate family but also anyone in Taira is aware of what happens to others in the community, and the right to such knowledge of private and family matters does not seem to be denied by anybody. People ask and receive answers, and news travels rapidly from one house to another. In considering the fear of censure and its effectiveness in social control, however, one should not forget that, conversely, the concern of others for one's life leads to a feeling of belonging and the expectation of help and affection.

Children are part of the gossip channel in that they are talkative and report news. They do not seem to invent malicious stories but do join in fun making at other people's expense.

Being too malicious is censured. Older people still remember that they heard in their youth about old wicked women who could bring a curse on others. The term for curse still connotes a person who is disliked or who snoops excessively in other people's affairs.

If possible, nobody is deliberately made subject to public exposure in case of wrongdoing. A township official, who by virtue of his office was also a member of the village council, showed little interest and responsibility toward the community. When the village meeting deliberated whether township officials should continue to be made members of the village council, his name was not mentioned, although the case was discussed at length in public. The final decision was to give him another chance. This, too, is characteristic of community behavior. Ostracism and complete rejection of serious offenders against the community would be a most serious punishment. This in itself would give the community a bad standing. A common front toward the outside is preferred, so that all drastic actions are left only for extreme cases. Rather, one tries to get along, even with a deviant person. Individuals between whom disagreement exists act friendly toward each other in public.

A deep sense of mutual obligation and duty not only toward imme-

778 'kami' is like the Oceanian "mana", a supernatural power that enters natural
171 objects or persons.[1] Whatever may be the case in Japan, the Okinawan kami refers to definite beings, discrete entities, and not to a force. However, the concepts shiji and perhaps shii may be mana-like.

753 Causes of Disease Okinawans frequently use these concepts of the supernatural in their interpretation of the causes and proper treatment of illnesses of the body. Illness may be caused, they believe, by loss of the shii or the mabui, by the harmful inclinations of other living persons and of dead persons, and by offences to ancestors and other spirits that are ordinarily helpful.

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[778] Gradual withdrawal of the shii may cause illness or death. A pregnant woman is warned not to attend a funeral or a bone-washing because the shii of the unborn child may be drawn into the tomb. A sudden jolt or a scare may cause the mabui to be dislodged and this will result in a feeling of weakness and, if the mabui is not replaced, perhaps ultimately death. Treatment of loss of mabui is often practiced by old women. One woman who had treated her grandchildren on numerous occasions said that she laid on a table offerings including salt, rice, water, and a dish containing seven stones; then she took a garment of the sick child, prayed at the entrance to the house, and called the child's name. The mabui of the child then entered the garment and when she put the garment on the child the mabui reentered the child. Formerly she would have prayed at the pigsty-privy, but
[776] it no longer exists. One of her sons gave the interpretation that the pigsty-privy god being the lowest god knew the whereabouts of the lost mabui and he informed the ancestral spirits who were able to bring it back to the garment.

[775] The most serious cases of loss of mabui are caused by the actual theft of the mabui by dead persons, who are said to take the mabui to the tomb. As I have already mentioned, this may happen when a baby sneezes.
[756] Treatment of this type of soul-loss probably requires the services of a yuta, a sort of shaman. The yuta is said to be able to see the living person's mabui before the tomb, in the form of the person. If the form is facing this world and looks sad there is a chance of recovery, but if it is facing the tomb and looks happy, the patient will probably die. But in spite of the occasional serious nature of loss of mabui, I have observed young boys when startled jokingly cry out "mabuyaa, mabuyaa!" as if to call back their displaced mabui. And it is said that some persons jokingly pretend to scoop it up and pour it back into the body through the head. However, the joke may serve to relieve actual tensions that exist after a sudden shock.

754 Little information was obtained on the harm that can be done by a living person with ichijama. According to Yanagida[1] the ichijama is the soul of a woman who can send it to possess a person or object in order to

1 Haring, 1946, p. 221 and elsewhere.

2 Yanagida, 1951, p. 30.

cause misfortune; the ability to do this, he says, is hereditary from mother to daughter. My informants did not identify ichijama with the mabui or any other such entity, but merely explained it as a kind of 'noroi', "curse". Its effect is a sharp pain inside the body or the feeling that a fingernail has been thrust into the eye. If the person responsible is known, they said, the affliction may be cured by spitting in his direction and throwing pig dung in his direction, shouting, "I smear it on your face!" According to Yanagida, a yuta can cure an afflicted person by squeezing his thumb, which causes the thumb of the person responsible to be crushed. 754 [756]

Illness may also be caused by gods or local spirits as punishment for the breaking of tabus. For example, at Yamazato in Chinen-son it was said that on the 1st, 8th, 18th, and 28th of every month the "mountain god" (yama nu kami) makes a circuit of inspection of the mountain behind the village and therefore one cannot go to cut trees or grass on those days for fear of punishment. 753 784

But probably the most frequent interpretation of illness and misfortune is that it is caused by ugwambusuku, an insufficiency of worship (from ugwang, "worship" and fusuku, "insufficiency"). As has been explained, the dead can influence the lives of the living for good or bad. If the ancestors of a family are well cared for, that is, receive the proper offerings and worship, they may help that family to prosper and multiply, but on the other hand, if the ancestors are not cared for they will let the family know of their needs by some light illness, or, if their needs are still ignored, by some greater misfortune. They may not deliberately mean to harm their descendants; the misfortune may be automatic; this point is not clear. At any rate, the fear of ugwambusuku appears to be a very common anxiety and to play a central role in the whole structure of ancestor worship. Various religious practitioners and diviners, but particularly the yuta, are frequently called upon to try to determine where the insufficiency lies, what deceased person has not received his full share of worship and is therefore causing the current illness or other misfortune. To account for such illnesses and misfortunes the yuta and others may have revelations (shirashi) which revise the family's genealogy and even reveal the existence of hitherto unknown ancestors. 753 769 775 [152] [756] [782]

The insufficiency is not always of worship of the ancestors, although this is probably the most frequent type. Illness may also be caused by an insufficiency of worship of the Fire God. It is said that if an illegitimate child or the child of a secondary wife does not worship at least once at the Fire God of his shiji ("line") that is, the Fire God of his father's family, he may become ill. Thus it is not uncommon for the mother of an illegitimate child to bring it to the house of its father and ask to let it pray once to the Fire God there. This practice may also, of course, serve to demonstrate paternity. 753 782 [848] [851]

Also probably related to the concept that the ancestors influence the living is the practice of establishing a fictitious adoptive relationship between a child and an unrelated family. If a child is weakly its mother may ask an unrelated adult to become the yashinee-uya, "adopted parent", 769 753